

# BATTLEGROUND OF FREEDOM

No state made a greater contribution to the winning of independence and the founding of the nation than South Carolina. Her sons served ably and well in the Continental Congress and many of her sons laid down their lives on the altar of freedom so that liberty and independence could be achieved. Her heroine daughters are legends of the land.

Upon the soil of South Carolina more battles were fought than in any other state. Both Virginia and Massachusetts have been referred to as "The Cradle of Liberty." South Carolina was "The Battleground of Freedom." Men from many states and nations came to South Carolina and fought and died. Where they fought, bled and died is sacred ground, consecrated by the blood of patriots. South Carolina's heroes such as William Moultrie; Sgt. Jasper; Francis Marion, "The Swamp Fox"; Thomas Sumter, "The Gamecock"; and Andrew Pickens of the Up-Country belong not alone to her but to the nation. Counties in 17 states are named in honor of Francis Marion, more than for any other military hero of the Revolution except General George Washington. There are many others deserving of remembrance for their valor and sacrifice.

The Palmetto state's patriot heroines include Rebecca Motte, who was willing to sacrifice her home to the cause of freedom; Jane Thomas, whose famous ride saved the Spartan Regiment from disaster; and Elizabeth Jackson, mother of Andrew Jackson, who died in Charleston while nursing sick and wounded American soldiers.

In January, 1775, South Carolina had its First Provincial Congress, in Charleston. In December, Tory influence was crushed by the "Snow Campaign." At the Battle of Seneca, Francis Salvador, a member of the Provincial Congress, was killed. He was the first member of the Jewish faith to be elected to a legislative body in America and the first to give his life in the Revolution. On June 28, 1776, the gallant defenders of Charleston fought the British at Fort Moultrie on Sullivan's Island. The pride of the British Fleet was destroyed and 2,000 British troops defeated. William Moultrie and Sgt. Jasper gained lasting fame.

South Carolina's leaders included two Presidents of the Continental Congress, Henry Middleton and Henry Laurens. Her Signers of the Declaration of Independence were the youngest of any state's, Edward Rutledge being only 26. His brother, John Rutledge, served as South Carolina's courageous Governor and great leader.

In 1777, Lafayette and Baron DeKalb landed at North Island near Georgetown and offered their services to the nation. DeKalb, a native of Germany, died three years later a hero's death at Camden, a Major General in the infantry. Lafayette earned the gratitude of the nation and became the symbol of liberty to both France and

America. Both Kosciusko and Count Pulaski, the Polish patriots, served with distinction in South Carolina.

For nearly four years, South Carolina was spared the horrors of war, then Charleston fell in May, 1780, and South Carolina became a conquered province. Except for Marion, Sumter and Pickens and their gallant followers, it seemed all was lost. After Camden, the tide began to turn with Musgrove's Mill, Hanging Rock, King's Mountain and Blackstock's. In October, Nathanael Greene, the fighting Quaker from Rhode Island, was given command of the Continental troops in the South. Daniel Morgan, an epic soldier of great courage, returned to active duty. In 1781, the British suffered a major defeat at Cowpens. The Battles of Ninety Six, Hobkirk's Hill, and most prominently, Eutaw Springs, seriously weakened the British will to fight on.

Over 150 battles were fought on the soil of South Carolina. Heroes came from many states. They included Isaac Shelby and John Sevier and "The Mountain Men" from the future states of Tennessee and Kentucky; Colonel John Eagar Howard and the First Maryland Line; Captain Kirkwood and the "Blue Hen's Chickens" from Delaware; General Jethro Sumner and the North Carolina Continentals; "Light-Horse Harry" Lee and William Washington from Virginia; and Elijah Clarke, Georgia's famous partisan leader. Many people served with great courage and great fidelity. General Nathanael Greene cited his black orderly, a free man from Maryland who gave his life in the Battle of Eutaw Springs, for his gallantry.

The British General Cornwallis, who had commanded the British forces in South Carolina for many months, surrendered to General Washington at Yorktown, Va., in September, 1781, one month after the Battle of Eutaw Springs. The British evacuated Charleston in 1782 and peace was restored to South Carolina, the Battleground of Freedom. The Revolution, however, did not end until the Treaty of Paris was signed in 1783. America's four delegates included Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, John Jay and Henry Laurens, the latter of South Carolina.

During the American Revolution, the Continental Congress authorized gold medals in honor of only six battles, two of them in South Carolina, Cowpens and Eutaw Springs. Untold suffering and self-sacrifice is the story of the people of South Carolina in the American Revolution. Their epic story and the memory of the gallant heroes who fought on the battlefields of South Carolina belong not to any state but to the people of the nation. Their example of service and sacrifice should not be forgotten. It is a part of the inspiring heritage of our country, a heritage in which every South Carolinian and American can feel just pride.

—Rep. Samuel Phillips Manning

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